

OCD NJ Summer 2016 Newsletter



Dr. Rob Zambrano will present "Applying Buddhist Concepts to the Treatment of Obsessive Compulsive Disorder."

Next Quarterly Meeting on June 13

Our next quarterly meeting will be held on June 13 at 7:30 p.m. and will be lead by Dr. Rob Zambrano, who will speak on the topic of, "Applying Buddhist Concepts to the Treatment of Obsessive Compulsive Disorder." Dr. Zambrano will be discussing how basic concepts of Buddhist philosophy relate to empirically supported treatment for OCD. Specifically, he will review how Buddhism discusses the fact that pain is a normal part of the human experience and how suffering occurs, in part, when we try to avoid this natural part of life. In OCD, we experience pain from intrusive thoughts and suffer when we engage in compulsions aimed at avoiding this pain rather than learning how to accept and cope with pain peacefully.

For more information on the presentation, click below:

<http://www.ocdnj.org/quarterly-meeting.htm>



Dr. John Piacentini was the speaker at our Annual Conference on March 13.

Dr. John Piacentini, Ph.D., ABPP Presented on "Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for OCD: How Science is Making Effective Treatment Even Better"

by Rachel Strohl, Psy.D.

On Sunday March 13, 2016, John Piacentini, PhD, ABPP. presented at the annual conference of OCD New Jersey (OCD NJ). Dr. Piacentini is Professor of Psychiatry and Director of the UCLA Child OCD, Anxiety and Tic Disorders Program and Center for Child Anxiety, Resilience, Education and Support (CARES). Dr. Piacentini's research focuses on the development and testing of evidence-based treatments for child OCD, anxiety, tics, trichotillomania and related disorders.

For the rest of Dr. Strohl's review, click on the following link:

<http://www.ocdnj.org/AnnualConference.htm>



Dr. Jeffrey Cohn, spoke about hoarding at our quarterly meeting in March.

Jeffrey Cohn, IICRC, RAI Presented on "Hoarding Clean Up: Addressing 5 Major Issues When Helping Those With Hoarding Behaviors"

by Rachel Strohl, Psy.D.

Jeffrey Cohn is 52 years of age and lives in Baltimore, Maryland. He graduated from the University of Maryland with a BA in Sociology. Jeffrey Cohn started SI Restoration in 1989, a cleanup company that

services homes or businesses after floods or fire damage, mold and mildew problems, or crime scenes. But over the years his company saw a demand for cleanups related to persons who hoarded increase and from there he developed, with Josh Rafter, Address Our Mess, a company specializing in hoarding clean up or, as he prefers to call it, "creating safe and healthy home environments."

To read the rest of the article, click this link: <http://ocdnj.org/cohnreview.html>



Michelle Villani, the Volunteer Coordinator for OCD NJ.

New Position at OCD New Jersey: Volunteer Coordinator

Michelle Villani, is a psychology doctoral student who is also someone who has herself struggled with OCD, and so she seemed like the perfect choice for taking on the position of Volunteer Coordinator, as she can take the personal as well as the professional point of view when it comes to this condition. We are thrilled that she has agreed to take this position through 2016.

If you are interested in finding out more or would like to become part of our volunteer list, Michelle's email address is mcuppari@gmail.com.

New Support Groups forming for Children with OCD and Their Parents

Seeking those interested in support group for elementary school-aged children (6- 12 years old) with OCD; Simultaneously, parents may also have a support group of their own. The groups will meet in Morris County, but the times and place of the meetings have not yet been established. The group will be run by Michelle, a psychology doctoral student hoping to specialize in the treatment of OCD. For more information or to sign up, please contact Michelle at (973) 214-1778, or email her at mcuppari@gmail.com.

OCD Support Groups in NJ

There is information on support groups throughout the state on our website. Click on the following link to find out if there is a support group in your area: <http://www.ocdnj.org/SupportGroups.htm>

Seeing The Light At The End Of The Dark Tunnel: My Experience With The Doubting Disease

by Ryan Pierson
7th Grade, 12 years old
Central Jersey

When I first got diagnosed with OCD at the very end of 2015, I was, to be honest, shocked. My struggles were nothing like that of an obsessive compulsive person.....or so I thought. Previously, my therapist had thought it was GAD (generalized anxiety disorder), and I perfectly agreed with that. I was drowning in a sea of anxiety, just barely keeping my head above water.....but when she said I had OCD, I was utterly and completely confused. Before long, I would realize that OCD comes in many forms, and it truly had been haunting me for three years.

After my official diagnosis, I was started on medicines to improve but instead, went down a big hill on the emotional rollercoaster I was riding. I never knew how I would wake up. Some days, I woke up so mentally exhausted from arguing with the thoughts all day that I felt nothing at all, walking around like a zombie all day at school. We soon figured out that I had harm OCD: my obsession was with hurting myself or others and my compulsions were to check with my parents that I wouldn't harm anyone and to test my limits by leaning over the balcony in my house. I came crashing down and hit rock bottom, harder than I ever expected, in mid-January.

OCD is like having a bully stuck in your head that nobody can see. Soon, school became a struggle. Every door had a sign with a suicide hotline number written across it, that would send a million thoughts racing through my head. What if you ever have to call that number? Even worse, what if you don't and you really hurt yourself? What will Mom and Dad and Avery and Emery do when I die? There were images too. Horrible images of my funeral and of a knife repeatedly stabbing into my chest with my own hand on it. One day I ran to lean over the balcony about 40 times. That day, I had to go to the local psychiatric hospital. It was Hell on Earth for the short time I was there, but luckily I didn't have to stay. I'm sorry, I know this is gory but OCD doesn't deserve to be sugar-coated. If we want awareness and a cure, it has to be told as it is.

Since I wasn't getting any OCD-specific treatment, I soon found myself with millions, billions, maybe even trillions of thoughts in my head, and no way to handle them. I simply fell into the trap of obsessive thoughts, letting them contain me and keep me from enjoying everything I used to love. I had no key to let myself out of this trap. So I continued to drown in that sea of worry. Luckily, there was soon a lifejacket: a youth behavioral health program to keep me just above the waves.

Soon, I wasn't going to school anymore. I was instead going to program. I was part of the children's program and although it was partially helpful for relaxing and easing some of the anxiety, it was not specific to my issue. There were kids there with anger, depression, all sorts of anxiety, but nobody else with OCD. However, the therapy part of the program was soon doing more hurt than harm. I was so triggered by many of the things they said that I ended up spending my whole time in the break room.

So, in hopes of some other way to treat the doubt disease, we found an amazing psychologist. I started ERP (Exposure Response Prevention), and soon I was, to some degree, controlling it. I was, by no means well, but certainly better than the dark place I was in in January. My heart hurt like no pain I had ever experienced before, my head turning more and more fearful and hopeless with depression.

Then, in the middle of March, I began to see the rainbow in the gloomy storm I was living in. I suddenly had a fierce urge to get better (although I sometimes felt like giving up). Not only did I personally want to get better, but I wanted others to get better too. I wanted to raise awareness. I wanted to find better treatments. I wanted to do something great.

Now here I am, still in the dismal mist of depression and OCD, but certainly heading in the right direction. I am confident that I will get better, because now I can see the light at the end of the dark tunnel.

Professional Directory

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“ Dr. Weg has produced a **masterpiece** that shows clinicians innovative ways to teach patients and their family members about the complexities of OCD. I **highly recommend** this book. It is entertaining and teaches a very useful way of communicating the difficult and often very frightening aspects of OCD symptoms and treatment. ”

— **Michael Jenike, M.D.**, Professor of Psychiatry and Founder of the OCD Clinical and Research program, Harvard Medical School and Founder of the OCD Institute, McLean Hospital

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